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KHPA Board Appoints Andrew Allison as Executive Director *Appointment Subject to Senate Confirmation*

(TOPEKA) – The Kansas Health Policy Authority Board formally appointed Dr. Andrew Allison, PhD, as the next Executive Director of the Agency. Allison has been serving as Acting Executive Director since June 1. His appointment for the permanent job is subject to confirmation by the Kansas Senate.

Today's vote came near the end of the Board's annual two-day strategic planning retreat. This year's retreat focused on how KHPA should respond and adapt to the state's changing fiscal and economic conditions, as well as what role the agency should play in developing state health policy in the future.

"We're really dealing with an entirely different landscape than we were just a year ago," Allison said. "Kansas is in the midst of a recession that is different from any other recession in modern times. That's putting tremendous strain on state finances, which is reflected in the budget cuts that the legislature enacted this year. We also have new political leadership in the governor's office as well as the Kansas House. And we have a new administration in Washington that is making health care one of its top priorities. The landscape has changed and so will the way we do business."

Established in 2005, KHPA administers the state's public health insurance programs: Medicaid; HealthWave, which includes the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP); MediKan; the State Employee Health Plan; and the State Self-Insurance Fund which administers workers compensation insurance for state employees. Certain non-medical programs under Medicaid, including nursing home care and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS waivers) are still administered by other agencies. The authority is governed by a nine-member board whose members are appointed by the governor and legislative leaders.

The statute establishing KHPA also requires the agency coordinating a statewide health policy agenda that incorporates effective purchasing and administration with health promotion strategies.

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During the two-day retreat, KHPA Board members said the agency would continue developing health policy recommendations for the legislature. But given the state's economic and fiscal condition, they said future recommendations will focus more heavily on health promotion, disease prevention, and policy changes that will improve efficiencies and reduce expenses. The Board also expressed its desire to strengthen collaborative relationships with other state health agencies, the governor's office and the legislature.

"We feel very fortunate to have Dr. Allison leading the agency during this time of transition," said KHPA Board Chairman Joe Tilghman. "He brings a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience to the job. As Medicaid Director over the last few years, he's also demonstrated his ability to manage a very large and complex program, and to really transform it in ways that make it more efficient and more accountable."

Allison, 42, began working at KHPA in December 2005 as the Deputy Director. He took on the additional role of State Medicaid Director in November 2006. Before joining KHPA, he spent six years at the Kansas Health Institute as a researcher and Director of Health Care Finance and Organization. His research focused primarily on the effectiveness, availability and cost of health care and health insurance in Kansas. He worked as a Medicaid budget analyst at the Office of Management and Budget in Washington, D.C., from 1992-95 providing staff support to President Clinton's health care reform effort and reviewing comprehensive statewide health care reform waiver applications. He has a bachelor's degree in history from Oklahoma Baptist University, a master's degree in public policy from Duke University, and a doctorate in economics from Vanderbilt University.